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Philips Targeted In Cathode-Ray Antitrust Probe

By **Shannon Henson**

Law360, New York (November 21, 2007, 12:00 AM ET) -- Dutch Royal [Philips Electronics NV](#) joined the ranks of its competitors Wednesday, saying it too was being investigated by officials for violating competition laws in the cathode-ray tube industry.

The announcement comes on the heels of [European Commission](#) and Japanese antitrust authorities searches of facilities as part of a probe. Cathode ray tubes are used in many television and computer monitors.

"As one of the companies that was active in the CRT business, Philips is subject to these ongoing investigations," the Dutch company said, according to the Dow Jones.

Philips also said that the investigation was in a "very early" stage and that it couldn't predict on the outcome. It also said that intends to cooperate with regulatory authorities.

The company did not respond to a request for comment Wednesday.

Earlier this month, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. and Samsung SDI Co. said that they are cooperating with Japanese antitrust authorities.

Japan's [Federal Trade Commission](#) is investigating suspicions of price-fixing in the Japanese, South Korean and Taiwanese markets, according to published reports. The Japanese regulatory body has not issued a public statement on the investigation.

The reports from Japan came only a day after EC officials carried out unannounced raids on cathode ray tube manufacturers, acting on suspicion that the companies were violating European competition laws.

"The commission has reason to believe that the companies concerned may have violated EC Treaty rules on cartels and restrictive business practices," the regulator said at the time.

The commission did not say what companies it raided. It said it had conducted the raids in cooperation with competition authorities in the individual nations where the raids were conducted.

The EC stressed in its press release that conducting raids was only a first step in an investigation.

"Surprise inspections are a preliminary step in investigations into suspected cartels," the commission said.

"The fact that the European Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behavior; nor does it prejudice the outcome of the investigation itself."

--Additional reporting by Brendan Pierson

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